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PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

The following announcement is taken from *The Journal of Philosophy Psychology and Scientific Methods* for June 5, 1913:

The subject of "The Standpoint and Method of Psychology" has been selected as the topic for the joint discussion of the American Psychological Association and the American Philosophical Association at its next meeting at New Haven. Professors Edward G. Spaulding and Howard C. Warren, of Princeton University, suggest the following formulation of the problem, which, it is hoped, will serve as a starting point for further formulations and discussions:

Data of Psychology.—Should psychology study unit-beings (selves, mind, consciousness), or inner states (*e. g.*, sensations feelings), or inner processes (*e. g.*, sensibility, affectivity, association), or certain relations between unit-beings and their environment (*e. g.*, reflexes, instincts), or several of these?

Method of Research.—Should the psychologist obtain his data mainly by self-study (introspection by himself and others), or by studying the motor reactions of organisms? If both methods be admitted, what is their relative importance?

Philosophy of Psychology.—Does a systematic psychology depend upon a specific world-view, or can it be developed, as are physics and biology, without a definite philosophical basis? In the latter case, do the results of empirical psychology compel us to adopt some specific philosophy?

Note.—The question of the nature of consciousness, sensation, introspection, etc., should be discussed only in its relation to the standpoint that is taken concerning the above positions.

A frank discussion of fundamental issues, by men who are pursuing different lines of research and have been trained in different disciplines, will often clear the air of needless misunderstanding, and may contribute more positively to the advancement of science. Nor can anyone be more welcome in such a debate than the philosopher, the 'spectator of all time and of all existence'; for he brings an historical perspective which the man of science too often lacks, and he weighs hypotheses with an impartiality which the special student too rarely attains.

It is, then, because I am in harmony with the spirit of the Note printed above that I am moved to enter a protest against the form which has been given to the subjects proposed for discussion. No one, not even the philosopher, may legislate for a growing science, and say what its data and methods 'should' be. Psychology makes its way through the tangle of experience by what methods it may, and gathers as data what facts it can; a new method may enlarge its scope, a novel observation may open up a whole field of work. Only when a science is perfect, and the life has gone out of it, can its data be circumscribed and its methods defined. Psychology as a science is still in its childhood, while its task is as immense as that of physics, the mother of the sciences; it appeals to all the temperaments, and satisfies the most diverse interests of man; to direct it by 'shoulds' and 'should-nots' would be, in my judgment, to hamper its growth and to check useful effort.

E. B. TITCHENER.